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SENATE MEMORIAL 5

**47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2005**

INTRODUCED BY

John Pinto

FOR THE INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A MEMORIAL

URGING CONGRESS TO IMPROVE COMPENSATION FOR NAVAJO PEOPLE IN  
NEW MEXICO ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS UNDER THE FEDERAL RADIATION  
EXPOSURE COMPENSATION ACT.

WHEREAS, congress adopted the Radiation Exposure  
Compensation Act to compensate people who suffered health  
consequences of the federal government's uranium mining  
operations in northwestern New Mexico between 1942 and 1971;  
and

WHEREAS, uranium mines were left open through the year  
1990; and

WHEREAS, amendments made in 2000 expanded the numbers of  
people eligible to receive compensation; and

WHEREAS, the amendments of 2000 also expanded the number

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1 of compensable diseases covered by the act; and

2 WHEREAS, despite the intent of congress to increase  
3 support for victims of the government's uranium mining, a large  
4 number of Navajo claimants have not been awarded compensation;  
5 and

6 WHEREAS, only three caseworkers currently handle some four  
7 thousand compensation claims; and

8 WHEREAS, only five hundred fifty-eight of six thousand  
9 potentially eligible Navajo claimants have been compensated  
10 over a fourteen-year period; and

11 WHEREAS, currently only three thousand seven hundred  
12 fifty-five Navajo claimants are registered; and

13 WHEREAS, there are an estimated five thousand unfiled  
14 claims; and

15 WHEREAS, the need for compensation for financial losses  
16 due to illness, disability and death resulting from the uranium  
17 mining operations is established but unmet;

18 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE  
19 OF NEW MEXICO that congress be requested to improve the  
20 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act to address these concerns;  
21 and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that appropriation be made for  
23 adequate staffing to process Navajo claims under the act; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Radiation Exposure  
25 Compensation Act be amended to include claims made while the

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1 uranium mines were open, or through 1990; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
3 transmitted to the New Mexico congressional delegation.

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